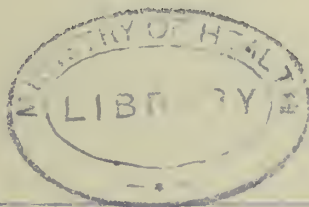


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B O R O U G H   O F   B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
AND THE SANITARY INSPECTOR  
FOR THE YEAR 1954.

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B O R O U G H   O F   B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
AND THE SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR

1954

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
(until 10th October, 1954)

J. B. KERSHAW, M.B., M.R.C.S.,  
D.P.H.

ACTING MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

ARTHUR C. GEE, M.R.C.S.,  
L.R.C.P., D.P.H.  
Lowestoft and District  
Area Medical Officer,  
Connaught House,  
High Street,  
Lowestoft.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
(from 14th March, 1955)

P. G. CANNON, M.B., Ch.B.,  
D.P.H.

SANITARY INSPECTOR

E. H. CRANMER, M.R.San.I.,  
M.S.I.A.

Municipal Offices,  
Blyburgate,  
Beccles,  
Suffolk.



## INDEX

Page

### REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Introduction	1
General statistics	2
Vital Statistics	2
Births	2
Still-births	2
Maternal mortality	2
Infant mortality	2
Deaths	3
Causes of death	3
Infectious Disease	4
Diphtheria immunisation	4
Tuberculosis	5
Food Poisoning	5

### REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR

#### Public Health Act 1936

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal	
Drainage and Sanitary Accommodation	6
Refuse Collection, Storage and Disposal	7
Smoke Abatement	7
Water Supply	8
Bathing Pool	8

#### Housing Act 1936

Repair of Unfit Houses	11
Provision of New Houses	11
Improvement of Existing Houses	11
Demolition of Unfit Houses	12

#### Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

12

#### Food and Drugs Act 1938

Slaughterhouses	13
Meat Inspection	15
Food Preparing Premises	16
Other Foods	17
Disposal of Condemned Food	17

#### Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949 etc.

17

Ice Cream	18
-----------	----

#### Factories Act 1937

18

#### Poliomyelitis Research

18

#### Conclusion

18





B O R O U G H   O F   B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
FOR 1954

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Beccles  
Borough Council.

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the health of the Borough for the year 1954, during which year, until 10th October, Dr. J. B. Kershaw was your Medical Officer of Health.

The rates which are among the most sensitive indices to the social conditions of an area are -

- (1) the Infant Mortality Rate, which in Beccles is less than half of that for England and Wales.
- (2) the death rate of children aged one to two years - nil here.
- (3) The death rate due to tuberculosis - nil here, and incidentally much reduced all over the country.
- (4) the standardised (adjusted) death rate - which here is practically the same as that for England and Wales in general.

During the first part of the year, an outbreak of measles occurred - 75% of the cases occurred in the first quarter - and all were children of, or below, school age. Measles, in the healthy, is usually a mild disease. Its importance is in the poorly nutritioned sickly child who tends to develop complications.

Regarding tuberculosis, no new cases were notified during the year and the total figure was actually reduced as two patients recovered completely.

Two other important matters occurred in 1954:-

(1) On 5th July 1954 the Government control of slaughtering ceased and private slaughtering was re-instituted. During the transition period, the Council were required to see that sufficient slaughtering accommodation was available for the needs of the district; a survey of slaughterhouses was carried out and consultations with the organisations representing farmers and meat traders were arranged.

As a result of this, 3 private slaughterhouses were licensed compared with 10 pre-war - a forward step this, enabling a much better supervision and standard.

(2) From 1st October, 1954, by Government order, it was made compulsory to provide caps or covers overlapping the lips of containers of pasteurised milk, and also milk distributors were required to put milk which is pasteurised into the containers in which it is to be delivered to the consumer at the premises at which it is pasteurised.

These measures are progressive and welcome.

## GENERAL STATISTICS

Area	2017 acres
Registrar-General's estimate of population (mid 1954)	7050
No. of inhabited houses	2850
Rateable value	£43,007.
Product of penny rate	£167.5.3d.

## VITAL STATISTICS

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Live births (Illegitimate Births)	57 (3)	38 (1)	95 (4)
Illegitimacy Rate - 42 per 1000 live births			
Illegitimacy Rate (England and Wales) - 46 " " " "			
Birth Rate per 1000 population = 13.5			
Adjusted birth rate = 14.4 (Comparability factor 1.07)			X
Birth Rate (England & Wales) = 15.2			

### X Note on adjusted birth rate

Local birth rates are usually expressed in terms of population. These populations are estimated by the Registrar-General and comprise persons of all ages, including many who quite obviously have no influence on the reproductive process. These latter do however affect the birth rate, in that a preponderance of them in the population of an area tends to lower, and a small proportion of them to raise, the true rate. Considerable variation in the size of this proportion exists in different areas and it is therefore apparent that the elimination or standardisation of such a factor enables a truer comparison between areas.

A result on these lines is obtained through the issue by the Registrar General of a comparability factor for each area for use with birth rates. The adjusted birth rate resulting from the multiplication of the crude birth rate of an area by its comparability factor may be regarded as being comparable with the adjusted rate of any other area or with the crude rate for England and Wales.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Still births</u>	1	-	1
Rate per 1000 <u>Total</u> births (live and still)	- 10.4		
Still birth rate (England and Wales)	= 24.0 (per 1000 total live and still births)		
<u>Maternal Mortality</u>	- Nil		
<u>Infant Mortality</u>			
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	= 1 male. Died at 6 hours after birth, cause - Prematurity, 7 months Gestation.		



Infantile mortality rate = 10.5

Infantile mortality rate  
(England and Wales) = 25.5 (Lowest ever recorded  
in England and Wales).

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Deaths</u> (all causes)	44	59	103
Death rate per 1000 estimated population	= 14.6		
Adjusted death rate	= 11.4 (Comparability factor 0.78)		
Death rate (England & Wales)	= 11.3		

Note: This comparability factor is obtained on similar principle to that for comparability factor for Births (see page 2).

<u>Causes of death</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	1	-	1
Other infective and parasitic diseases	1	-	1
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	1	-	1
" " lung, bronchus	1	1	2
" " breast	-	3	3
" " uterus	-	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	5	7	12
Diabetes	-	1	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	5	8	13
Coronary disease, angina	5	6	11
Hypertension with heart disease	-	3	3
Other heart disease	14	22	36
Other circulatory disease	-	1	1
Pneumonia	1	-	1
Bronchitis	3	-	3
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	1	-	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	4	2	6
Accidents (other than motor vehicle)	1	2	3
Suicide	1	-	1
Homicide and operations of war	-	1	1
	<u>44</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>103</u>

#### Details

Other infective and parasitic diseases - 1  
(Meningitis in man of 55, who also had pleural effusion and bronchopneumonia)

Diabetes - 1 (myocardial degeneration in female of 72)

Pneumonia - 1 (male of 60)

Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea - 1  
(Female of 71. Acute gastroenteritis contributed to senile myocardial failure).

Accidents - 3 (1 male of 43 - suffocated during an epileptic fit.  
(1 female of 44 - toxæmia due to severe burns of chest and arms caused by clothing catching fire)

(shock following fracture of right femur - female aged 90.)

Suicide - 1 (drowning in male aged 52)

Homicide and operations of war - 1  
(1 female of 81 - gun shot wounds).

### Comparative Statistics

	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>
Population	6791	6862	6829	6903	6965	7050
No. of inhabited houses	2312	2362	2860	2927	2520*	2850
No. of live births	101	79	78	99	99	95
Birth rate (crude)	14.8	11.6	11.4	14.3	14.2	13.5
No. of still births	2	4	1	2	3	1
Maternal mortality	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infant mortality rate	59.4	25.3	12.8	30.3	0	10.5
(No. of deaths)	(6)	(2)	(1)	(3)		(1)
Number of deaths (all ages)	104	88	108	92	82	103
Death rate (crude)	15.3	12.9	15.8	13.4	11.7	14.6

\* Change in basis of valuation figures.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following notifications of infectious disease were received during the year:-

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Whooping Cough	2	3	5
Measles	57	49	106
Puerperal pyrexia	-	1	1
			<u>112</u>

Measles outbreak occurred in 1st half of year - 75% of the cases in the first quarter, and all in children of, or below school age.

Whooping Cough 2 in same family; only 1 case above the age of 6.

### Diphtheria Immunisation

The following are the figures for Beccles:-

During 1954, 93 primary immunisations were carried out in Beccles at the child welfare clinic and by the general practitioners. During the same year 88 Booster doses were given.

The ages of the children immunised are as follows:-

Children born in 1954	-	8	immunised.
" " " 1953	-	69	"
" " " 1952	-	4	"
" " " 1951	-	0	"
" " " 1950	-	2	"
" " " 1949	-	1	"
" " " 1948	-	5	"
" " " 1947	-	1	"
" " " 1946	-	2	"
" " " 1945	-	1	"

The importance of immunisation against Diphtheria is to be stressed, as although there is a much less incidence, it still does occur, and will increase if immunisation is not carried out on a big enough scale.

Immunisation against Diphtheria and Whooping Cough can be carried out by three injections (one at monthly intervals) of the one material and gives little or no ill-effects. It can be started at age 3 - 4 months.

Vaccination is still recommended in all infants, particularly the males. With new technique, there should be no harmful effects to the child.

### TUBERCULOSIS

	<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Pulm.</u>	<u>Non-Pulm.</u>	<u>Pulm.</u>	<u>Non-Pulm.</u>	
No. of cases on register at beginning of year	19	7	7	8	41
No. of cases added during year	-	-	-	-	-
No. of cases removed during year	-	1	1	-	2
No. of cases on register at end of year	19	6	6	8	39
<u>Additions to the Register</u>	- Nil				
<u>Removals from the register</u>	- Recovered - 2.				

### FOOD POISONING

No case of this was notified during the year.

I am,  
Your obedient servant,

P. G. CANNON.

Medical Officer of Health.

August, 1955.





B O R O U G H   O F   B E C C L E S

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
SANITARY INSPECTOR  
FOR THE YEAR

1954

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To His Worship the Mayor (Chairman) and the Members of the  
Health Committee.

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my sixth Annual Report since my appointment in May 1949 as the Council's Sanitary Inspector and Food Inspector.

ACTION TAKEN UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 1936

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Drainage, Sanitary Accommodation

The majority of the Borough is provided with sewerage, and in all cases where it is reasonably available, owners have been required to connect property to it. The sewers in the central and older part of the Borough are brick built and of great age. They are a source of concern to the Borough Engineer on account of not infrequent collapsing of the arch and roadway, and it would appear that the re-laying of some of the older sewers cannot indefinitely be delayed. There is no evidence of a harmful effect on Public Health, apart from the occasional infestation of properties by rats from defects in sewers.

The sewage disposal plant of the Council is situated on their Marsh Estate. Sewage gravitates into a well, where it is screened and pumped to a tower, from which it gravitates to a series of lagoons, through the dyke system of the Marshes to the River Waveney. The only treatment is screening and sedimentation, the whole system is outmoded and inadequate and the purity of the effluent leaves much to be desired. Although only one complaint of nuisance from the works was received, this may be due more to their isolated position than their efficiency.

The Council have acquired land outside the Borough for the provision of a modern sewage disposal works but as a result of restrictions on expenditure and lack of evidence of immediate and demonstrable danger to Public Health, the very desirable measure of providing proper sewage disposal for the Borough is in abeyance.

There are some 76 properties in the Borough without water carriage drainage or sanitary accommodation. They are situated in Darby Road, Pudding Moor and isolated positions on the fringes of the Borough.

The provision of a sewer in Darby Road is in progress, and it should before long be possible to provide proper drainage and sanitary accommodation to the majority of the properties in the area. Plans have also been made for the sewerage of Pudding Moor, but financial restrictions may delay the initiation of this very desirable work.



Unsewered properties are provided either with septic tanks of varying degrees of efficiency, discharging into dykes or the River Waveney, or with pail closets emptied by the Council.

The perpetuation of this latter mediæval sanitation is a reproach to the Borough and it is to be hoped that in the not too distant future, all properties with the possible exception of those in isolated positions, will be provided with decent waste disposal facilities.

Fifteen notices were served on owners of property requiring improvements or repairs to sanitary accommodation or drainage during the year.

### Refuse Collection, Storage and Disposal

The collection and disposal of refuse are the responsibility of the Borough Engineer.

Collection normally is weekly and would appear to be both adequate and efficient.

Disposal is by tipping on the Marsh Estate of the Council, in a position well removed from dwellings, and no nuisance therefrom has been reported or detected.

Periodically, the tip is inspected for the possible presence of rats, but the numbers found have been small and readily controlled. During the warmer weather, the tip is sprayed with insecticide, and it was possible to limit the nuisance from flies and other insect pests to insignificant proportions.

Notices were served on the owners of ten properties requiring the provision of satisfactory dust bins, and informal action sufficed to secure compliance.

## PUBLIC HEALTH ACT 1936

### Abatement of Nuisances

#### Smoke Abatement

The major industries of the Borough are not excessively grit or smoke producing, and pollution of the atmosphere in this way is generally minimal and spasmodic.

It has been necessary to approach the managements of three factories during the year following complaints of the excessive emission of smoke. In one case, structural alterations to a flue secured the abatement of the nuisance, in the other two the use of an inferior fuel and perhaps a temporary lessening of concentration by that important member of a factory staff - the stoker, contributed to the nuisance. Unfortunately, the stoker in a factory is sometimes the "odd-job man", with the result that fires are permitted to burn too low, and then heavily charged with fuel. If only the importance of a stoker's job on the health of the community, and the amount of hard cash which he can save his employers by the economic use of fuel were adequately appreciated, there is little doubt that the atmosphere of the country would be much less vitiated by smoke. The excessive emission of smoke, and wastage of fuel are synonymous, since smoke is incompletely consumed fuel. The motto "little and often" as applied to the stoking of factory furnaces, and indeed fires of all kinds, cannot be too often stressed, from the points of view of Public Health, the National Economy and the Economy of the firm or household concerned.

It is interesting to note that these remarks apply with equal force to the ordinary householder, for it is estimated that more than half of the pollution of the atmosphere is caused by the domestic fire, and over this form of pollution, there is no legal control whatsoever.

A complaint was received during the year of nuisance from the emission of diesel fumes from a stationary engine. Modifications to the exhaust system and a re-positioning of the exhaust were successful in abating the nuisance.

### Water Supply

Since October, 1949, the supply of water of the Borough has been the responsibility of the Council, through its Water Engineer, it having been formerly supplied by a private Company.

Until recently water has been obtained from bores at Pudding Moor, but the Council, with adjoining Local Authorities are members of a Regional Water Board and water for the Borough will eventually be extracted, treated and distributed from Barsham. This bore was in use throughout the year, but pending completion of the headworks, treatment has continued to be at Pudding Moor, and the bores there have been periodically brought into use to maintain them in a state of readiness in case of emergency.

Samples of the water have periodically been submitted for Chemical Analysis by Messrs. Lincolne Sutton and Wood of Norwich, a typical report being appended on page 10.

In addition 12 samples were taken for bacteriological examination. They indicated that, although the samples were taken before chlorination, the water bacteriologically was beyond reproach.

In all cases where a mains supply is available, and connection is practicable, owners have been required to provide a piped supply. There are 23 properties in the Borough not supplied by the Council, water being drawn from wells or bores. They are situated on the fringes of the Borough, where the provision of a main would entail a very great expense for one or two houses, or where levels would not permit a connection to the mains.

### Bathing Pool

The position at the Council's Bathing Pool in Pudding Moor remained unaltered during the year, and the place continued to be an anxiety to the Council's Public Health Officers.

The Pool is merely a fenced-off area of the River Waveney, and the water in it is demonstrably sewage polluted. Pollution would appear to be from three main sources:-

- (1) Drainage from surrounding marshes.
- (2) Unsewered property in the area.
- (3) Waste matters from moored or passing boats.

There obviously can be no control over the pollution of marsh dykes by cattle.

As mentioned under the Section of this Report dealing with sewage disposal, proposals have been made for the sewerage of Pudding Moor, but their application has been held up by restrictions on capital expenditure.



With the increasing popularity of holidays on the Broads, pollution from river craft is becoming progressively more serious. The number of people on the Broads at any time during the summer represents the population of a small Town discharging crude sewage into the river. The possibility of requiring Broads craft to instal some form of conservancy sanitation has been explored by the appropriate Authority but the practical difficulties are very considerable, and there is no legal right to require that it should be done.

To be safe for swimming purposes, which, particularly with children involves swallowing greater or lesser quantities of water, or at least contaminating the lips and hands with it, the water of a swimming pool should be of the same standard of purity as drinking water. It would be an impossibility to attain that standard in the Waveney.

The Council's attention has repeatedly been drawn to the danger inherent in the use of the Swimming Pool, but they felt obliged to open it during the year, preferring the possibly remote chance of infection from the Pool, to the more tangible danger of fatalities due to drowning if the Pool were closed, and children thereby encouraged to bath in unsupervised and unobserved parts of the river.

During the summer 19 swabs were submitted for bacteriological examination from the Bathing Pool, and other parts of the river. In no case were organisms of the salmonella group isolated. In addition 12 specimens of water from the Pool were submitted. Faecal coli ranged from 35 to more than 1,800 per 100 ml. and the specimens, to quote a typical report were "typical of river water unprotected from surface drainage".

25th October, 1954.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS OF WATER

Sample received from Beccles Borough Council.

Marked Public supply, Waterworks, Pudding Moor, Beccles.

Date Received 11th October, 1954. Appearance when received Clear

Nature of Deposit Nil

Colour Nil

Odour Nil

Reaction Neutral pH 7.1 Taste Satisfactory.

RESULTS OF CHEMICAL ANALYSIS IN PARTS PER MILLION

Ammoniacal nitrogen	0.01	Hardness as CaCO	
Albuminoid nitrogen	0.03	Total	305
Nitrate nitrogen	nil	Carbonate (temporary)	250
Nitrite nitrogen	nil	Non-carbonate (permanent)	55
Chlorine as chlorides	42	Alkalinity as CaCO	250
Oxygen absorbed (4 hr., 27° C.)	0.28	Free carbon dioxide	32
		Total solids (at 180°C.)	443
		Iron (total)	nil
		Metals in solution	nil

OPINION

This water is of very good organic quality, and the chemical analysis shows no sign of pollution. The water is moderately hard, the total hardness approximating to 21° Clark, and all but 4° of this hardness is temporary and due to dissolved chalk. The free carbonic acid content is not high, and this water is not to be expected to have any serious corrosive action on metals. Iron and other metals were absent from the sample. Its clarity, odour and taste were all very satisfactory, and in our opinion, this water is fit for drinking purposes and well adapted for use as a public supply.

ERIC C. WOOD

For LINCOLNE SUTTON AND WOOD.



## HOUSING ACT 1936

### Repair of Unfit Houses

The year 1954 saw the coming into operation of the Housing Repairs and Rent Act, which inter alia, permitted owners of property to raise rents, provided that the house was in all respects (including decoration) fit, and provided that certain sums had been spent on repairs within specified periods.

It is difficult to comment on the effects of the Act locally, for it has not been sufficiently long in operation to permit its provisions to be widely known. It may also well be that some rents have been raised by agreement between landlord and tenant without recourse to arbitration. In the Borough, no application was received by the Council for a Certificate of Disrepair to contest a claim for an increase of rent, and the general impression gained is that the safeguards rightly made by Parliament have deterred many owners from seeking to increase rents. A reminder to owners that they can, subject to the terms of the Act, increase rents after putting their property in a fit condition, has not made them noticeably more eager to carry out repairs.

Forty-one dwelling houses were rendered fit after the service of informal notices requiring the execution of repairs under Section 9 of the Housing Act 1936.

### The Provision of New Houses

The Council's drive for the provision of new houses continued during 1954, when 61 Council houses and 5 privately owned houses were completed. The total number of houses erected by the Council since the war is 616, or roughly 1 per 11 of the population.

The Council take great pride in their achievements in this direction, and it is to be hoped that their enthusiasm will remain unabated. Bad housing and over-crowding help to create a reservoir of infection and spread its effects beyond those immediately affected. The important part which psychological factors play in physical health and well being is being increasingly appreciated, and there can be few more potent causes of strain, misery and degradation than over-crowded, squalid or indecent housing conditions.

Concern has been expressed about the cost of the Council's housing programme. Its benefits in terms of human health, happiness and dignity cannot be over-estimated, and it would appear to be so much more sane to spend money in this way than in seeking to cure the fruits of bad housing in the form of physical ill-health, psychological maladjustment or delinquency.

### The Improvement of Existing Houses (Housing Act 1949)

There was no change in the Council's attitude to the making of Improvement Grants under the Housing Act 1949 for the modernisation of houses which, although sound, lack such amenities as a bathroom or a constant supply of hot water.

The opinion of the majority of the Council was that the ratepayers of the Borough, through the provision of new houses are already heavily committed financially, and that further expenditure by the making of grants for improving houses would mean an undue and disproportionate expenditure on housing.



The Council's Sanitary Inspector has felt it to be his duty to remind them on numerous occasions that the effort to improve housing standards should be a three pronged attack - the demolition of unfit houses, the improvement of sound but outdated houses, and the provision of new ones. Without some financial assistance, many sound but outdated houses will fall into decay and have to be replaced at much greater cost by new houses. The tenants of these houses - the majority of those in the country - can never hope for such rudimentary amenities as a bath and a constant hot water supply, unless their Councils implement the provisions of the Act.

Whilst the Council's anxieties about the cost of Housing Improvement is appreciated, the hope is expressed that they will re-consider their attitude to this question.

#### Demolition of Unfit Houses

In April 1949, the Council made Demolition Orders under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936 in respect of 33 houses in the Borough.

The following is a statement of the position at the end of 1954:-

Houses demolished	15
In process of demolition	3
Demolition not possible as integrated with occupied houses	11
Still occupied	4

The delay in securing the vacating of some of these houses is caused by the attachment of some elderly persons to their surroundings, and their distress even at the prospect of being uprooted. The Council have taken the view that the whole purpose of re-housing is to better the health and happiness of the persons concerned, and that compulsorily to uproot an elderly person from a house to which he or she has an attachment, however difficult it may be for the outsider to understand an attachment to some of the cramped, insanitary and inconvenient property involved, would be improving neither their health nor their happiness.

#### PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949

The local control of rat and mice infestation in the Borough is the responsibility of the Sanitary Inspector; the Council employ one rodent operator. Nation-wide control is in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who pay 50% of the Council's expenses in this work.

The year was one of useful work in this important public health field. Without exception, it was possible to deal expeditiously with surface infestations which were usually slight, and, if followed by improved hygiene and proper rat-proofing, temporary.

The sewer rat problem however has continued to give grounds for much anxious thought. Experience has shown that almost without exception rat infestations in the central and older parts of the Borough have their origins in defective or disused drains or sewers.

The Borough's sewers have been treated twice yearly in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The result in Beccles appears to have been on each treatment to thin out the rat population only enough to provide a more propitious environment for those remaining, resulting in an increased rate of breeding, with the result that at the end of six months the population is back to normal.

There is also evidence that rats are living and breeding in pockets between manholes and never travelling to the poison left at man-holes.

In an effort to be constructive, the Council are co-operating with the Ministry and other Local Authorities in an effort to improve techniques, but the real long term answer is undoubtedly the provision of sound sewerage and drainage, for it is significant that none of the sewers on the Council's new estates has shown evidence of infestation.

## FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938

### Slaughterhouses

As has been recorded in successive Annual Reports, the Council have been placed in a most difficult position since 1940 by the operation of a Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse in the Borough. The premises, situated most unfortunately, were slaughtering not only for Beccles, but for four adjoining districts in addition. This placed a heavy burden on the Council's officials in the form of meat inspection, and a heavy cost to the ratepayers of the Borough in the payment of salaries for work which was only partially for their benefit.

Since for many years, the Council and many other ratepayers have hoped that the de-control of meat supplies would result in some easing of the position and since their expectations have not been realised, it may be well to record in some detail the events of the year in this direction.

When it became known that meat supplies were to be de-controlled, the Government placed on Local Authorities the responsibility for ensuring that adequate slaughtering facilities were available in their districts for the temporary period pending the implementation of the declared policy of moderate concentration.

To carry out the Government's instructions, there appeared to be four alternatives before the Council, each of which was explored in detail:-

#### (1) The provision of a new Municipal Abattoir

It was made clear that existing facilities were to be used, since any new slaughterhouse may not fit in with the eventual country-wide scheme of moderate concentration. The cost of building a new abattoir would have been prohibitive, especially as there could have been no guarantee as to its permanency. It would have been necessary for the Council to staff and run it, and it would have been an arithmetical impossibility for it to have been anything but a continual drain on the financial resources of the Borough.



(2) The Acquisition by the Council of one of the existing slaughterhouses and its control by them as a Municipal Abattoir

The possibility of the Council acquiring by agreement the Caxton Road premises, the only slaughterhouse in the Borough which could conceivably have been used for the purpose was seriously considered. The proposal met with no great favour from local butchers, and the expense of acquiring the premises and staffing them, with no guarantee of the support of local tradesmen meant that it must have been a financial millstone around the Ratepayers' neck.

(3) The amalgamation of slaughtering in one premises by local butchers

A meeting was held with representatives of the butchering industry, and it was impossible to reach agreement on this matter. Some of them made it apparent that they were opposed to any alternative to the re-opening of private slaughterhouses.

(4) The re-opening of private slaughterhouses

The Council regarded with concern the only other possibility, that of a reversion to the pre-war conditions of numerous small, badly sited slaughterhouses as a retrograde step, chiefly because it appeared to be inevitable that nuisance would be caused to the occupiers of adjoining houses, and that it would be difficult to maintain meat inspection standards if many premises were slaughtering simultaneously. They also viewed with concern the undefined cost to the ratepayers when, with the implementation of the policy of moderate concentration at some unspecified date, it became necessary to close slaughterhouses and compensate owners.

The Council directed their Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector to express their opinions to officers of the Meat and Livestock Division of the Ministry of Food at Guildford, but it was possible to do no more than place on record the Council's concern at the possible Public Health and other consequences of the Government's policy.

The Council were therefore faced with a heavy and continuous expenditure, and a lack of essential support if they adopted any policy other than the re-opening of private slaughterhouses, and it was also apparent that a refusal to return to the butchering industry the freedom of which they were deprived during the war, would not be in accord with the intentions of the Government of the day. They therefore adopted the only procedure reasonably open to them, and agreed to license three slaughterhouses, on condition that they were first brought up to a reasonable standard.

Complaints have subsequently been received, as was inevitable, for no amount of care can make the slaughtering of animals anything but a distressing business to sensitive persons living in the district. It is pleasing to say however that slaughterhouse owners have co-operated to the full in seeking to lessen nuisance.

## Meat Inspection

The Council's difficulties in connection with meat inspection to which reference has been made in earlier Reports have not been lessened with the de-control of meat supplies, as was hoped. They have in fact greatly intensified, chiefly because the Caxton Road Slaughterhouse has been purchased by a firm killing a relatively large number of animals for sale as meat elsewhere, chiefly at London.

The position became so acute that the Council had to increase their staff by employing a local Veterinary Surgeon, Captain J. C. Taylor, on a part time basis, from 1st October, 1954. He and the Council's Inspector are responsible for meat inspection on alternate weeks, and this arrangement has worked smoothly, and has greatly eased the position.

The position in Beccles is illustrative of the anomalous and seemingly unfair position which arises under present legislation. The animals are not reared in Beccles. With the exception of a trifling amount, none of the meat produced is consumed by the ratepayers of the Borough. Due however to the fact that the premises are sited in the Borough, the whole cost of inspecting the meat, which is at times a full-time job for one officer, is thrust on the ratepayers.

The following gives details of slaughtering and inspections in the Borough during the year. It will be remembered that from 1st January to 30th June slaughtering was under the control of the Ministry of Food, while from 1st July to 31st December, it was carried out in the three private slaughterhouses in the Borough.

	<u>Cattle</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
January	75	-	52	-	303
February	78	19	65	41	352
March	96	17	20	538	306
April	123	9	20	203	244
May	180	15	8	266	208
June	87	8	2	644	246
Total Jan.- June (Ministry of Food)	639	68	167	1692	1659
July	193	146	16	46	432
August	61	629	3	12	270
September	64	681	28	14	342
October	69	799	30	-	356
November	87	760	21	10	283
December	44	499	5	-	427
Total July - December (Private slaughtering)	518	3514	103	82	2110
Totals for 1954	1157	3582	270	1774	3769



Details of slaughtering during the past 5 years are recorded for comparison:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Other Cattle</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Pigs</u>	<u>Total</u>
1950	300	1,356	1,707	3,202	299	6,864
1951	290	1,533	1,665	2,309	972	6,769
1952	296	1,567	1,682	2,803	2,339	8,687
1953	272	1,242	1,454	3,570	2,851	9,388
1954	3,582	1,157	270	1,774	3,769	10,552

Details of condemnations during the year 1954 are as follows:-

	<u>Cattle</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep &amp; Lambs</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
Number killed	4,739	270	1,774	3,769
Number inspected	4,739	270	1,774	3,769
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis</u>				
Whole carcase condemned	25	5	2	11
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	2,045	-	2	195
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	43.68%	1.5%	.22%	5.46%
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned	166	-	-	9
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1,214	-	-	154
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	29.12%	-	-	4.32%

#### Food Preparing Premises

The following is a record of food preparing and handling premises in the Borough:-

Grocers	33
Greengrocers	11
Bakers	10
Butchers	13
Catering Establishments	17

Premises registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act 1938 for the manufacture of potted, pressed, pickled or preserved food number 8.



Routine inspections were carried out during the year and eight informal notices served requiring the remedying of defects.

### Other Foods

The following other foods were condemned as being unfit for human consumption during the year:-

211 tins of meat, fruit, milk, vegetables or fish.  
78 lbs. cheese.  
13 lb. cake mixture.  
Sundry other small items.

### Disposal of Condemned Food

Meat condemned at the local slaughterhouses is processed for use either as fertiliser or used after heat treatment at other premises, for animal feeding. Condemned meat is stained, and a receipt showing its destination required.

Whilst there is every confidence that condemned meat from the Borough is so treated, the fact that legally it is still permissible to expose for sale raw diseased meat for animal consumption must remain a source of concern. There can be no control of such meat once it has been purchased. At best it may contaminate kitchen implements not afterwards sterilised, at worst it may be used by ignorant or careless people for human consumption, so lightly cooked as not to destroy parasites or pathogenic organisms.

The time is surely ripe for legislation forbidding the removal of diseased meat from slaughterhouses before sterilisation, or at least making illegal the exposure for sale of raw diseased meat for any purpose. Fortunately there is no such business in the Borough, and there can be little doubt in view of the Council's expressed views on the subject that they would view with extreme disfavour any effort to establish one.

A small quantity of non-infective liver is sold, under proper safeguards, to mink breeders in the area.

Other condemned foods are disposed of by burning on the Council's refuse dump.

### MILK AND DAIRIES REGULATIONS 1949 ETC.

The following are details of licences issued by the appropriate Authority to milk producers or retailers in the Borough, which were in force on 31st December, 1954.

Pasteurisers	2
Tuberculin tested producer	1
Tuberculin tested distributors	2
Undesignated milk distributor	1

The Minister of Food announced his intention during the year of including the Borough of Beccles in a "Specified Area", that is an area within which only specially designated (viz. Pasteurised, Sterilised or Tuberculin Tested) milk may be sold. The Order was to take effect from 1st March, 1955.

Whilst many people may regret the passing of small independent dairy businesses, from the purely Public Health point of view it can be a source of nothing but the greatest satisfaction that raw undesignated milks will no longer be

sold in the Borough. To many, it seems anomolous that whilst the sale of milk containing added water is rightly an offence, the sale of milk containing pathogenic organisms is not, unless negligence can be proved. Indeed, in the case of milk containing the brucella abortus organism the public who are liable to be infected by it may have to pay compensation through rates or taxes to the producer required to divert it for heat treatment. It is undeniable that there is a local prejudice among some people against heat treated milk, but advocates of the sale of raw undesignated milk would do well to examine post-mortem the carcase of a cow suffering from an advanced generalised tuberculosis and contemplate that shortly before slaughter, its milk may have been consumed raw by children.

### Ice Cream

There is one manufacturer of ice cream in the Borough, and 19 premises are registered for the storage and sale of ice cream, all of which is pre-packed and manufactured elsewhere.

### FACTORIES ACT, 1937

There are fifty factories with Mechanical Power in the Borough. Two notices were served requiring the rectification of defects.

There are two non-power factories in the Borough.

Certificates of Adequate Means of Escape in Case of Fire have been issued to the six factories in the Borough to which Section 34 of the Act applies.

### POLIOMYELITIS RESEARCH

It has been the pleasure of the Council and its officers to continue to co-operate with the Virus Reference Laboratory of the Central Public Health Laboratory by the submission of specimens from the Borough, as part of the investigations which are being carried on into the incidence and spread of Poliomyelitis.

### CONCLUSION

In retrospect, the year 1954 was in one respect at least, a disappointing one.

It has been hoped for some years that the removal of control from slaughtering and meat distribution would result in some easement of the burden which the Council were carrying, principally for the benefit of other Local Authorities. This expectation has not been realised. In spite of representations made by the Council, Government policy has resulted in a great increase in their obligations in the inspection of meat eventually consumed all over the country.



It would appear to be patently unfair that the ratepayers of the Borough should continue to carry this burden unaided, and that other public health work in the Borough should continue to be neglected on account of it. It is earnestly to be hoped that the long awaited report of the Departmental Committee on Slaughterhouses will contain proposals for remedying the position, otherwise the Council will no doubt feel obliged to continue to draw attention to it.

In most other ways, the year has not been an unsatisfactory one. The Report of the Medical Officer of Health indicates that by every yardstick by which the health of the population may be measured, Beccles is very slowly and over a period of many years, but nonetheless perceptibly, becoming a healthier place in which to live.

It is a source of the greatest satisfaction that the Borough has shared in the nation-wide improvement in Public Health, symbolised by the increase in the expectation of life, the virtual elimination of many killing infectious diseases such as small-pox and typhoid fever, and the lessening of the incidence of and mortality from diphtheria. It is no coincidence that these results have stemmed from an insurgence of interest in preventive public health measures, and those whose privilege it has been to contribute in however small and local a capacity, feel no inclination to apologise for the comparatively insignificant national and local expenditure which has produced such significant results.

It is my pleasure to conclude this Report with a sincere expression of appreciation for the support which has always been forthcoming from the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee. To Drs. Kershaw, Gee and Cannon who have at various times been the Council's Medical Officer of Health, whose advice and guidance have always been readily and unhesitatingly available, I am most grateful and I would also thank most warmly my other colleagues in the service of the Council for their helpfulness during the year.

E. H. CRANMER.

Sanitary Inspector.

August, 1955.









